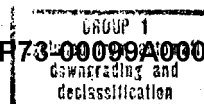Attachment 3

MICROFORMS FOR ACTIVE FILES

1.   The typical hard copy file in the Agency (if there is such a thing) consists of safes containing miscellaneous correspondence folders in which documents are grouped by subject and into which clerks periodically interfile new material into the folders with Acco fasteners. Typical chrono files are sequential and do not require interfiling. Individual folders are closed out and removed from the file at irregular intervals. These files, according to the Agency Records Management Officer, occupy over 221,000 cubic feet of space in Headquarters, take ███ clerks to operate and cost $9.7 million annually. Each year the growth of the files requires ██ additional clerks and costs $300,000.

25X9
25X9

2.   None of the Agency's 58 active microform systems and applications provide an efficient means for dealing with this basic type of records filing. Although millions of dollars have been spent by the Agency in the development of large automated and semiautomated microform storage and retrieval systems for highly specialized applications, such as Minicard, Walnut and the CRS aperture cards, the "typical file" problem remains unsolved. The inability to efficiently interfile individual images (pages) is probably the greatest deterrent to the use of microform systems throughout industry as well as Government.

3.   The updatable microjacket system now being used experimentally in RID perhaps comes the closest to meeting the "typical file" requirements. However, while it has definite advantages for micropublishing, it is probably too cumbersome to find wide application for files.

4.   The most promising system seen by this writer is a microfiche camera which produces electrostatic images and provides a capability for adding on additional images at a later date. This system, being produced by the Audac Corporation, was described in an Agency briefing and is expected to be announced publicly within a month. Computer output microfilm (COM) devices produce microfiche and add and delete pages with the greatest of ease. The text for these devices, however, must be submitted in machine language. It is highly unlikely that devices such as CompuScan will be able to accurately convert random typewritten documents (or Xerox copies) to magnetic tape for years to come, and microfilming of hard copy will remain the principal means for miniaturization.

5.   If the space problem in Headquarters is to be alleviated and the clerical manpower is to be minimized, a far greater effort in research and development must be made to provide a microform substitute for the "typical file."